Appendix A. Comments on Spotted Dog WMA Acquisition EA received by FWP by the comment deadline.

	Para- graph	
†	#	Comment
		See page A-16
)		See pages A-17 & A-18
3		See page A-19
1		I am not in favor of purchasing the Spotted Dog ranch property. This should remain private property, as we need the tax base. The more property taken away from private use, the fewer taxes are available for use by the state. In addition, there is no access to this land for public use. Seasonal access would likely only be on foot or on horse, which discriminates against the majority of hunters. This does not seem to be an appropriate use of the Restoration Funds, as this property was never a major mining area. These funds should be used in the areas which need reclamation and restoration.
5	1	As a water resource professional and a sportsman I <u>fully support</u> the FWP's purchase of the Spotted Dog Ranch through the NRD program. Over the last couple years I have had the opportunity to visit the Spotted Dog Ranch in evaluating water quality for the State of Montana. The ranch is truly an extraordinary piece of land and will be a tremendous asset for the people of Montana and in promoting the health of the Upper Clark Fork Watershed.
	2	Thank you for your time and commitment to making this happen.
6		According to their own website, "Rock Creek Cattle Company is comprised of the 28,000-acre Home Ranch, the 50,00 acre Spotted Dog Ranch, and secluded Rock Creek Lake". If it is currently owned in whole or in part by Bill Foley, I presume he and his tenants/co-owners are paying property taxes on it, and maintaining the land in the condition prescribed by the State. So this leads me to ask four questions. [1] If the 27,616 acres in question are sold to the State, how much will this reduce the revenues of the County and State? [2] How will Powell county and the State compensate for the loss of revenue? [3] Where is our cash-strapped State getting the money to pay for this land (which we the public, will then have to pay to maintain)? [4] And lastly, why is the State doing this? It seems like a losing proposition for our community.
•		I support Alternate A, the Purchase of the Spotted Dog property from Rock Creek Cattle Company. What a great piec of property!!!!! Please "Thank" Rock Creek Cattle Company for offering it to the public, I know it takes allot more time to get it sold this way then to a private party.
3		The Spotted Dog Property represents a once in a lifetime opportunity to keep vital winter ground intact while also providing public access, asthetic values, and helping keep the rural nature of Montana. In my opinion the FWP should pursue this purchase at all costs. Everyone knows what the end result will be if it goes on the open market. The only gain will be to the realtors with wildlife bearing the brunt of economic development. Good luck with the aquisition, I wis you the best.
)		I am a land owner and avid fisherman. I strongly support The Spotted Dog WMA acquisition. The west side of the Deer Lodge Valley has very limited public access with Rock Creek, The Prison and The Letica property all virtually locked up. The East side, though much better, still is largely inaccessible. The Spotted Dog property would be a great asset to the sporting public.
0		See page A-20
1		As a resident of Montana and a avid snowmobiler, I am totally against the proposed closure of off road use to snowmobilers. The are no facts that they disrupt the Elk or Deer winter areas. Further more the sleds do no damage to the landscape
2	1	I saw the news todaycongratulations! Wondering if you might be interested in a similar property with an amazing array of wildlife just north of Yellowstone Park in Paradise Valley?
	2	It is adjacent to the WSA, NFS and a large dude ranch. 1187 acres under conservation easement is offered for \$9,750,000. Please see the attached pdf brochure for photos and more info. I would be happy to address any questions. or take your staff to view the property.
	3	Also, do you know the name of the listing agent on the Spotted Dog Ranch? The name was not mentioned in the loca paper.
3		[Landowner] who owns adjoining property to the east of SD, called to say he is in full support of the project. He has concerns over increased OHV use, and wants to be sure we do something in the Management Plan to protect the resource.
4		We have major budget problems now, and you want to spend this kind of money to take a large portion of land off of the tax roles? this just shows how inadequate these agencies have become.
5		Please don't waste money that this state does not have taking more land out of production and out of the tax base.
16	1	It has come to my attention that the FWP is planning on purchasing land in the upper Clark Fork Basin, turning private land into another wildlife management area, and that funding will come from the Natural Resource Damage Program. You appear to be abusing your power and taking care of special interest needs with this activity.
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17		This is a good use of NRD \$. Great project. And it sounds like a great price.
18	1	I started this rant as a reply to a specific article about the state buying 28,000 acres of private land for 16.6 (plus that they're spent acquiring) million dollars but realized shortly after starting the reply that this is about fundamental values that our forefathers held and we should hold dearly. It's about freedom, not capitalism, democracy or conservatism, freedom and basic rights our countries citizens have that almost no other country in the world can offer. We are special, Montana is special, and I say lets quit changing things so that we're like everyone else. if people don't like trhe color of our necks or the stains on our door panels, there's 49 other states they can go too. Please! True, real and thankful Montanans, wake up. We don't have to take this.
	2	Dan McQuery and Josh Magraw both had valid points in the aquisition of a HUGE amount of land by the state. I enjoy and use the state and federal land we have in our county but I'm not sure the government should be owning any more.
	3	There doesn't seem to be much the state (or any government body for that matter)can run efficiently. The DOT is a nightmare of waste, fraud and abuse, our correction system is a joke and the department of labor and industry is a leach on society (I have personal experiance with all three of these if you would like to contact me for details). I don't like to see private land split up and sub-divided any more then the next guy, but the key term here is private property. I have yet to hear a valid REASON the state wants to buy this, and if I could get in on doubling my money overnight I do have 20 acres the state might want to buy.
	4	Montana has historically been a "free from crap" politics state and kind of a refuge for people whom didn't like the direction their state was moving in. That is what is beautiful about America, if you want medical marijuana, there's like 28 states you can move to and obtain a card, if you want gay marraige there's like five. We (Montanans) don't have to follow these trends (notice I included us in one example). It's ok to leave. That is what our whole republic is based on (I didn't say democracy).
	5	State land ownership gives the public great opportunity, but the cost of a government whom is a land majority owner is going to basically have the same effect as a government whom is the major employer in the state (which it is). It depends onitsel to live the taxes it collects from the people it pays is not enough to pay the people, get it? If you want to live in Europe, move there, don't change us even if we are the minority. There are places already established that have the government controls which you seek, we don't necessarily need them here.
	6	There is no way this (increasing state land ownership) can be efficient, effective or economically feasable. Let the government stick to "protecting" us by keeping criminals off the street and keeping our transportation and communication pathways open. they have enough trouble doing that properly, much less delving deep into our citizenry.
	7	My brother, a public service official for 23 years had a nice little saying that actually runs true, not some times, and not generally, it is true, all of the time, "there's the people (government employees) out there who think it's us against them, and then there's the people out there who want to serve."
	8	In God We TrustDespite what anybody else thinks!
19		I am opposed to purchasing the Spotted Dog Ranch using money from Natural Resource Damage Program. I suggest FWP find other funding sources to purchase this property but at a better price. I believe FWP is using the imposed "deadline" as ploy to push this purchase through. NRD money should only be used for restoration projects in the Clark Fork Basin and unfortunatley this proposal has nothing to do with restoration.
20		I believe the ranch should be kept open to grazing as this property has some of the best pasture in the state. I used to work for Rock Creek Cattle Co. back when it was still owned by Russel Stovers in the 1990s and there was always alot of grass. The elk hunting was great also. I also think that there are alot of folks that make their living ranching in this area and they need more consideration . Also, this ranch should be entered in the Farm and Ranch Protection Program, this will allow both grazing and hunting.
21a 21b		Please add me to the mailing list for the Spotted Dog WMA proposed purchase. See page A-21
22a		[First comment letter received from this person] This proposal has "fraud" written all over it, disguised as something that it is not, for the public good. I can guarantee if this "acquisition" proceeds, there will be legal consequences and anyone involved will be held accountable for official misconduct in addition to the intent to defraud. The truth will be exposed. Where has the honesty and integrity in the public sector gone? In the end, if successful, the taxpayers of Montana will end up paying for this proposal, no matter what spin is put on it.
22b	1	[Second comment letter received from this person] Analysis: Due to some time constraints, I only analyzed a few aspects of the Spotted Dog Land Acquisition.

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Comment

- History: According to the CAMA website, this property was purchased by Y T Timber, LLC (RY Timber) in 1983. Since RY Timber is a logging operation in Townsend, it is presumed this was purchased for the timber. After logging the merchantable timber it is assumed that they intended to sell the property. It was for sale for a length of time. The price was reduced from \$22,000 to \$17,000. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation was interested in the property and the now deputy director of FWP, Art Noonan, former legislator and past director of the Democratic Party has stated that 10 years prior the State tried to acquire it but could not find the money. It is not certain how much Mr. Foley eventually paid for the home portion and the option for the Spotted Dog. Mr. Foley purchased the home portion of the Rock Creek Cattle Company with the intention of developing it into an exclusive subdivision. This option is assumed to expire in 2011. Mr. Foley is attempting to sell the unsold lots of the home portion per public media articles.
- The Spotted Dog Ranch portion shows conflicting reports on who contacted who. Governor Schweitzer states he was looking for properties 4 to 6 months prior to July. However, the property was not on the market at that time. The urgency was due to the pending private sale, however no proof of a pending sale has surfaced. It is therefore assumed that the State contacted Mr. Foley regarding the property.
- 4 Apparently the option for the Spotted Dog Ranch was \$9,000,000. However, this is not certain either as the option price was removed from the appraiser's report for the grant.
- Fish, Wildlife and Parks: Fish, Wildlife and Parks has gone through some major personnel changes during Governor Schweitzer's tenure. In 2006 the Parks Administrator retired. This is a hired position according to personnel policies in accordance with State law. The Governor intervened in the process and as a result, Joe Maurier, Governor Schweitzer's college buddy was hired. Joe Maurier was the previous director of the Colorado Parks Department. There was apparently some misappropriation of funds in the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoors Recreation from approximately 2000-2006. Joe Maurier reported directly to the Governor instead of his supervisor, the Director.
- As soon as Governor Schweitzer was re-elected in 2008, he fired the Director and appointed Joe Maurier to the director's position. In January, per public reports Joe Maurier in turn hired Art Noonan as Deputy Director. Art Noonan as stated earlier is the past director of the Democratic Party.
- 7 <u>Land Acquisitions</u>: In December 2008 Joe Maurier of FWP approved a \$3.3 million dollar 30 year lease in West Yellowstone, at the Royal Teton Ranch, called the Buffalo Field Campaign.
- FWP immediately began work on the Environmental Assessments for this property in addition to property in the Alberton Gorge area. Funding for the Alberton Gorge acquisition is being requested through the USFS. The funding for the Spotted Dog acquisition is being requested from the ARCO restoration settlement funds for toxic contamination of the Upper Clark Fork River Basin.
- 9 The Bair Ranch Foundation sold the first 1,160 acres of an eventual \$10 million, 8,200-acre land deal to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, which then conveyed the lands to the federal government for inclusion in the Lewis and Clark National Forest as reported in July, 2010.
- The only other large expenditure from the Restoration Fund was a 9,000 acre acquisition managed by FWP between Anaconda and Georgetown Lake. The Elk Foundation obtained \$17.3 million to purchase 23,300 acres under the U.S.F.S.
- Environmental Assessment Spotted Dog: I concentrated mainly on the financial portion of the acquisition. FWP in addition to the acquisition cost is requesting \$1.2 million for operation costs for the next 5 years in addition to paying the lease payments to the Department of Natural Resources. There will be no grazing. This will have a negative financial impact. The \$1.2 million dollars will generate approximately \$2 million in positive economic impact. The \$15.2 million dollars purchase price will have no economic impact and will leave the State. If these same funds were used for restoration projects there would be a \$30 million dollar economic impact within the State.
- 12 The EA was submitted to the public on June 29, 2010.
- Grant Application: The grant applications requests were supposed to be submitted by March. A special amendment had to be instituted to accommodate this application by FWP. There is no date on the application on the web-site, so it is not certain when it was submitted. The criteria points will be analyzed in a comment directly in comments to the
- 14 Again, I concentrated on aspects of the acquisition dealing with the financial aspect of the acquisition.
- 15 It stated there would be no negative tax consequences. The estimate of taxes is stated at \$15,000 annually. However, the 2009 actual taxes on the property was \$22,000.
- It states that FWP does not have the funds to acquire or maintain this project. The application receives more points for matching funds. FWP is proposing \$13,000 cash for contract services, the balance is for work-in-kind, for a total of approximately \$30,000. This is less than 1% of the grant request. The other grant requests for 2010 average 17% matching. The grant only includes operational funding for 5 years.

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- Appraisal: According to the appraisal by Hall and Hall, it is assumed that the there is complete access. The preliminary title report shows 40% lacks a right of access. The option price was completely blacked out. The property is no longer listed. In the 27,000 plus acre appraisal, no consideration was given to the fact that the property has been logged by the current owner. In addition, the total property owned by YT Timber, LLC has an additional 600 acres, which is not listed in the acquisition. This property is adjacent to the home ranch owned by the Rock Creek Cattle Company, who FWP wishes to purchase the property from. Some of the other parcels belong to private individuals and the Spotted Dog Land Investment from Michigan. This is the most prime property of the Spotted Dog. Hall and Hall has ties to environmentalist special interest groups.
- Conclusion/Opinion: It appears that this is just another land acquisition for "public use". It is fairly obvious that the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is a clear player and Governor Schweitzer does have extensive ties with this organization. Fish, Wildlife and Parks, through personnel changes instituted by the Governor no longer has the ability to conduct itself according to the mission of the agency; to the people of Montana and to the protection of the fish and wildlife resources.
- 19 The money would be better spent restoring the toxic damage created by ARCO. This would generate 15 times the economic benefit for the citizens of Montana.
- 20 The Governor is the trustee of the fund, regardless of the council's recommendation or public comment.
- 21 The only real way to challenge this proposal is to file a lawsuit. The basis for this legal challenge would be a conspiracy. The number and title of the participants is unknown, but for certain the Governor and officials from FWP would be named. The basis for the legal challenge would be intentional misrepresentation of material facts with the intent to deceive fraud.
- The national economy is based on the most productive use of PRIVATE PROPERTY. When you take productive property out of the tax base and put into government ownership, you destroy another opportunity to increase the GDP and improve the national economy. We do not need nor want another failed "wildlife management area". We are sick to death of this dishonest government agency stealing the money from another program to buy more land for the government. It is not a productive investment. It is not a purchase that is wanted or needed. Our Constitution has designated the only uses or reasons for government to own property. This is NOT ONE OF THEM. We, the undersigned, want you to know we emphatically oppose the purchase of property in the upper Clark Fork basin for another wildlife management area. We strongly say NO!!
- I would like to go on record as being opposed to using Natural Resource Damage Settlement funds for the Spotted Dog land acquisition. While I am not opposed to purchasing the land and actually think it is a good idea for the State of Montana to make the purchase, I do not support using Natural Resource Damage funds for that purpose. If this property is purchased by the State of Montana, other sources of funds should be used for that purchase.
 - As a former seven-term Montana Legislator representing Butte, I have been very active in monitoring the cleanup and restoration of the Clark Fork River and Silver Bow Creek Superfund sites. I strongly believe that the Berkeley Pit, the Butte Hill, Butte's Silver Bow Creek and the Montana Pole Treatment Plant have received band-aid type cleanups. Until responsible cleanup and restoration has taken place on these sites, I believe it would not be prudent for the State Of Montana to spend monies from the Natural Resource Damage Settlement Program for such purchases as the Spotted Dog land acquisition.
 - It appears to me that the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has made the decision that the Natural Resource Damage Settlement funds are their own personal "slush fund" and can be used for any purpose they so desire. I am a former seven-term member of the Fish and Game Committee in the Montana House of Representatives. I believe the Department would far better serve the State of Montana if they would devote their efforts to managing important wildlife issues such as dealing with the wolf issue that is destroying the big game population in the state of Montana. Far better than trying to figure out how to use the Natural Resource Damage funds as a "slush fund!"
 - I describe this type of purchase of the Spotted Dog land as a "frills type purchases!" Purchases such as this at this time are not a prudent use of these funds. The entire Butte area including Butte's Silver Bow Creek, the Parrott Tailings, the Berkeley Pit, the Butte Hill and the Montana Pole Treatment Plant should be remediated and restored or guaranteed to be cleaned and restored to a quality level before these funds are allocated for such purchases. A guarantee to use the remaining \$65 to \$70 million funds from the cleanup of Silver Bow Creek from Montana Street to the Warm Springs Ponds, to assure these cleanups and restorations are completed at the headwaters of the Clark Fork and Columbia Rivers would help to accomplish this goal.
 - I also believe that using these funds in a creative way such as selling bonds for the purchase and guaranteeing the bonds is a far more prudent and responsible use of the funds. I also believe that using Federal Stimulus funds or funds form the Fish Wildlife and Parks funds created for such purchases is by far a better way to purchase the property.

and the Parrott Tailings area, that substantial future cleanup and removal of contaminants from these areas will necessary. Until such cleanup and restoration is completed, a threat or real release of toxic mine tailings will evide the cleanup and removal of contamination of Silver Bow Creek, the Clark Fork River and the Milliown Dam area. I strongly belied cleanup and removal of contaminated tailings from these areas is a Superfund cleanup action. However, becauthe incompetent decisions made to date by the Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Montana age this necessary cleanup and removal of toxic tailings will eventually become the responsibility of future taxpayers Montana or will require the use of Natural Resource Damage funds! 7 Future fish kills in these areas are inevitable until a responsible cleanup and restoration has taken place on But Silver Bow Creek and a removal of the Parrott Tailing along side and under the Butte Civic Center and Butte Silver Bow Creek and a removal of the Parrott Tailing along side and under the Butte Civic Center and Butte Silver Bow Creek from Butte to Milltown Daml 8 The recent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico should also be a major concern for the residents of the State of Montan the State Agencies. British Patroleum Company the company that caused the oil spill and has shown an irresponsible to releasing the toxic berkeley Pit waters in perpetuity. As I say to folks when asked how long it will take to clean the Berkeley Pit waters, "perpetuity is a prologitme!" 9 While I realize the decision on the acquisition of the Spotted Dog land is what most folks in Butte and Montana describe as the "fix is in," and there is nothing can be done to change this decision I still feel compelled to write letter! As my old friend and former lawyer in Butte, "Cubsy" Coyle would say, "When the fix is in equally on both sides and justice will prevail! 25 To whom it may concern; I am a Deer Lodge valley resident and I oppose the use of DNRC funds to purchase to lowe land that	Com- menter #		Comment
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	32		Great idea. I am for it.

Com- menter	Para- graph	
#	#	Comment
33		I was very surprised to learn of the FWP's plan to purchase this property. There has been nothing in the Helena's Independent Record newspaper that I have seen. An online search shows most major papers in the state have had an article on this but nothing in Helena. Has FWP contacted the IR staff regarding this proposal? Please respond via email.
34	1	I oppose the Spotted Dog Acquisition for three reasons.
	2	The amount of money being taken out of the NRD funds for the purchase is too large given the fact that no restoration of damaged natural renources will take place.
	3	2. It is not clear the FWP has the financial resources to operate and maintain this property over a long period of time. The fact that FWP has requested five years of Operation and Maintenance Dollars from NRD funds in addition to the acquisition cost only adds to the concern that FWP is acquiring lands beyond their ability to maintain.
	4	3. The fast track, the amending of established procedures, the cloud over how ownership will transfer to FWP and how much money will be gained by whom all create an atmosphere that leads the public to question what is taking place. At a time when public confidence in government is low, the handling of this proposal by decision makers further erodes that lack of confidence.
35		See page A-22
36		I am writing in full support of the FWP purchase of the Spotted Dog Ranch. This ranch is located in a perfect local, between federal lands, and provides a great access benifit to all such lands. The wildlife value is without question something which must be protected, and enhanced through professional management. This is a once in a century opportunity for FWP and all Montanans.
37	1	I have gone through your draft EA for the proposed Spotted Dog WMA. My comments are not to be construed as being for or against, but rather just to raise some questions that come to mind because I could not find them addressed anywhere in the document. They involve grazing permits and travel planning.
	2	My comments are based on my knowledge from spending 20+ years working in range management on the Helena National Forest and probably knowing this area better than anyone who has worked up there. I am now retired and my comments do not necessarily reflect the ideas or concerns of the Forest Service.
	3	In your EA there was no mention of the fact that there are several intermingled and unfenced sections of RCCC land which are in, or partially in, two Forest Service grazing allotments. RCCC has two private land and one special use permits in these areas. In the case of the Hat Creek allotment RCCC has not grazed there for quite a few years due to the inconvenience of location. The Spotted Dog allotment has been used by them continuously. In both cases the allotments have other permittees with the bulk of the permitted livestock.
	4	If there is to be no grazing on the WMA how will this situation be dealt with within the Forest boundary? How will it affect the Forest Service permittees? They have not been informed. Fencing the sections out separately would be impractical which is why they have never been fenced. I see on your map on page A9 that section 35 between Slate and Hat Creeks is shown as fenced. It is not fenced except on the north side unless this has been done in the last couple of years. RCCC also has a private fence across the north side of section 21 (north of Baldy) which is not exactly on line but which serves as a private allotment boundary fence. This is not on your map.
	5	As mentioned in your EA there are a lot of miles of fencing in the area. Who will take care of the boundary fences as those boundary fences do not belong to the Forest Service?
	6	My other concern is access. It was stated in the EA that one of the reasons for the proposed WMA is better public access. Right now the only motorized access (except in winter) to the Forest Service land is via the Tree Farmer road. For better of worse this does keep hoards of people out of the area. However even with this long drive there are increasing travel plan violations, mostly in the area between Irish Mine Hill and the Limberger Springs. The Forest Service is in the process of doing a new travel plan which I suspect will have some more restrictions. Do you think that your improved access will result in more travel plan problems on the forest?
38	1	This is a wonderful opportunity for FWP and all sports and outdoor people to use and enjoy this beautiful piece of land forever.
	2	If this land were to go into private ownership, divided and developed, this would add to the pollution and mis-use to the Clarks Fork tributaries and environment, and headwaters.
	3	I have hunted and fished on bordering property and it has been a long time wish of mine to be able to access this land.
20	4	Money spent on this proposal will be forever for all of us.
39		I am in agreement for the State of Montana to acquire the Spotted Dog Property, as long as it is open for public access to hunt, fish, and vehicle or ATV access.
40	1	The chance to acquire land such as this does not happen often. The department should definitely acquire this piece if funding can be arranged.
	2	I am familiar with this area and hunted it in the past. It is perfectly located by bordering public lands.

Com- menter	Para- graph #	Comment
41	1	I am in favor of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks proposed acquisition of the Spotted Dog tract. I would rather see these lands in public ownership than a private entity where it could likely be subdivided.
	2	However, my primary concern is with the proposed roads to be kept open from May 15 th – December 1 st . I'm opposed to these roads being open, because of the subsequent impact to the overall hunting, for the following reasons:
	3	1. I'm quite familiar with the lands within this block and, due to the open terrain, it will be nearly impossible to prevent people from driving off road and enforcing the road closures.
	4	2. A primary objective of this acquisition is to "permanently protect fish & wildlife resources for elk, mule deer and antelope" but the amount of roads being proposed to be open from May 15 th – December 1 st will directly conflict with this objective. These open roads will be loop roads and will become a road hunter's dream. Combine that with the open nature of the land and it will only be a short time before those animals realize these lands are not a safe place to be and run to adjacent private land causing future headaches for both those landowners and the FWP. Eliminating these loops roads and protecting the core of the block will keep some of these animals on the property and provide for a quality hunt for those hunters willing to walk a couple miles. I'm not advocating closing them off at the bottom, just somewhere at an effective location to still provide the road hunters some access and the walk-in hunters some quality hunting as well. I also believe this would greatly increase the FWP's ability to keep people on designated roads.
	5	3. If the roads are to be kept open, I believe a stricter management for elk on these lands is needed to perpetuate the herd on the property. The reason the elk herd is large and thriving on this block is due to the limited amount of access. I understand the elk herd in 215 is currently over objective, as defined by the Elk Management Plan but the plan is largely politically driven and flawed. Do you honestly believe that, by allowing "roughly 3,000 hunter days for 500 hunters" and keeping those roads open, the elk will remain on those lands? The opportunity to hunt will be there but realistically, I don't believe the opportunity to harvest elk will be that great.
	6	The EA states that this acquisition would provide "long term conservation for some of the "best big game habitat in Western Montana". What currently makes this some of the "best big game habitat"? Forest resource managers routinely hear from FWP biologists that logging and open roads do not provide good habitat. Given this tract has been, to say politely, intensively harvested and heavily roaded, how can the FWP say this proposal will contribute to these lands being "some of the best habitat" when there is very little cover left, proposed open roads through the core of the block, open terrain and being opened to "roughly 3,000 hunter days for 500 hunters"?
	7	Again, I support the proposed acquisition but would like to see further restrictions to the access in order to keep the elk on the property rather than drive them to adjacent private which provides little to no opportunity for the general public.
42	2	As a Board member of the Skyline Sportsmens and a member of FWP R[egion] 3 Citizens Advisory Committee: I fully endorse this proposal. It will be a great acquisition for future generations of all walks of life, not only hunters and sportsmen. Our children and future generations can look to this as they come of age. This will replace lost habitat from the mining that left Butte and area to Missoula spoiled.
43	1	I believe acquiring this area would be very important to protecting far our big game animals, and perhapshunting, hiking and sightseeing opportunities.
	2	We are losing our wild and scenic areas and should do all we can to protect them.
44 45	1	I am completely in favor of this purchase and hope it can be done. The last thing FWP needs is a 28 million dollar play ground for all FWP employees! This would be an absolute waste of money at the expense of sportsmen and women and the tax payers of MT. WrongWrong!
	2	I have talked to a lot of people about this and nobody disagreed with me! It is way past time to clip your wings!
	3	And this just another reason why I haven't supported FWP for many years.
46	1	I ranched in the Canyon Creek Area ½ way between Helena and Lincoln from 1953-1989. 40 years ago elk and deer stayed up in the high country between Wolf Creek and Ellenston along the continental divide. There was 4000 to 5000 sheep grazing in the area also. You seldom saw an elk in the lower Canyon Creek valley, summer or winter.
	2	Then enter the FWP. Domestic livestock grazing was eliminated. The area was determined to be a Wildlife Management area (WMA). The FWP bought some of the private property and bought conservation easements on two ranches in the area.
	3	Last fall where were the elk? 300 to 500 head, depending on who you talk to were on three private ground in the lower Canyon Creek valley. There were no elk between Fletcher Pass and Stemple Pass until hunters chased them up there from the lower valley.
	4	The FWP in their infinite wisdom created a WMA that wildlife did not like and will not stay on.
	5	The FWP has totally ruined this area for wildlife by their gross mismanagement. This area has tall coarse grasses that wildlife will not eat and areas where brush has taken over creating a fire hazard.
	6	This has happened all over the state. South of Dillon on the Blacktail WMA, the Robb-Ledford near Alder and over on the Madison.

Com- menter #		Comment	
	7	The FWP is the very worst land managers in the state of MT and should not be allowed to own or manage even one acre of ground.	
	8	For these reasons I vehemently oppose the FWP purchasing the Spotted Dog property. These lands should be left as private property.	
47	1	I am in favor of acquiring the Spotted Dog property.	
''	2	I am not excited about FWP ownership as it will result in expansion of a beuracracy.	
	3	However, the alternative is probably development which is creating thousands of "warts" on the landscape.	
48	1	I was in attendance at the public hearing in Deer Lodge on July 14, 2010. I don't have any problems with the FWP purchasing the proposed Spotted Dog property. But, I do have a problem with no mention of trapping or trappers. I see hunting, fishing, camping and recreation. But no trapping.	
	3	Then from December 1 to May 15, there will be no one on the land, four-wheelers, snowmobile or walking. I have trapped on parts of that land in past years and no thinking trapper in his right mind will pack traps or the animals that he harvests around on foot. I do not own a horse and therefore must rely on a four-wheeler, snowmobile or pickup to trap out of.	
	4	Furthermore, November through mid-April is when fur trapping is done in Montana. Also no trapper wants to be trapping in an area of high hunting pressure. Because along will come some hunter, see a coyote or other animal in a trap, feel sorry for them and put him out of his misery. So he puts a 180 grain 300 mag the full length of the critter. End result – wasted time and wasted fur.	
	5	Trappers are a part of the Montana landscape. Let's not push them out.	
49		As a dedicated hunter and sportsman for over 40 years, as a resident of Montana and a director with Skyline Sportsmen, I wish to lend full support for acquisition of the Spotted Dog Ranch for the public.	
50	1	I fully support the pruchase of the Spotted Dog ranch with NRD funds. I support the proposal and the corresponding amendment. Keep in mind two very important truths while considering this proposal:	
	2	First, the fact that "they" quit making land.	
	3	Second, a bird in hand is worth two in the bush.	
51		Yes, I support the puprchase of the Spotted Dog property.	
52		FWP received a voicemail today from Jim Crichton of Helena, giving support for the Spotted Dog acquisition. He noted that he was born in Deer Lodge. He said that he would follow with an email.	
53		I believe that this land should be purchased by the State even though there are financial concerns for both the short and long term. It is a one-of-a-kind acquisition that will not be available again, ever. There is no other available property that would be of as much value in terms of wildlife management and protection in the state. Thanks for the opportunity for input.	
54	1	I am writing in enthusiastic support of acquiring Spotted Dog Ranch land for fish and wildlife habitat and public access.	
	2	These kinds of opportunities don't present themselves very often and the people of Montana would forever regret it if the state doesn't acquire the land.	
	3	It's also a good use of resotration fund money in my opinion.	
55	1	We have been reading and following the proposal and possible sale of the property known as Spotted Dog with interest and concern. As property owners of adjacent land and also Forest Service livestock permittees in this area we have numerous concerns of how this acreage will be managed.	
	2	We feel that it is obvious that our livestock will be in jeopardy as the area will be a breeding ground for the grizzly and black bear, wolves, elk and possibly even bison. Will there be any protection or compensation in the event to loss?	
	3	Other matters of concern are the fencing and maintenance of the fencing in this area, the access roads and the possible influx of people in general for hunting and recreation. In general, they are very respectful of others, but a few can ruin it for everyone including destruction on this very land that is open to them. Will this all be monitored?	
	4	Thank you for the chance to address these issues to you. Please consider our landowner/permittee rights when you make your final decision.	
56	1	Opponent.	
	2	I was born and raised in Butte, and now the mess there. There are still miles and miles of river left to clean up, and I think it should be cleaned all the way to Mill Creek or beyond. Have a price of what it is going to cost to finish the project and a little stash in the bank.	
	3	Are license fees going to be raised a huge amount of money? I hope not.	
	4	Where are you folks going to get the money and manpower to take care of this area?	
	5	I'm sorry but I don't think the FWP needs this much area.	
57	1	I received a copy of the Draft Environmental Assessment referenced above on 1 July 2010. Together with my two sons I own the Cross Canyon Ranch located just south of Avon in Powell County, Montana. I believe our property has more contiguous borders with the Rock Creek Cattle Company land in Avon, Montana than does any other property owner.	

Com- menter		
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	2	We have a number of concerns related to this proposed acquisition and its impact on us as a neighbor. Additionally, we are a bit frustrated, in "Article VI Good Neighbors" of your Management Overview there is an indication of wanting to develop a good neighbor policy, and unfortunately no one contacted us regarding this proposal until I made contact with Ray Vinkey at Fish, Wildlife & Parks during the week of 5 July 2010. Ray was helpful and I appreciate the time he spent with me on the phone. I believe that early contact with us as neighbors as well as a number of other neighbors would have resulted in an opportunity for all of us to work together toward the best possible use of this property. Having talked with some of my neighbors I believe a great number other neighbors have concerns with this proposal.
	3	In summary, the concerns that are most frustrating to the people in this area are the following:
	4	• The amount of time left open for public comment and input of the most affected people (those residing in the valley near Avon, Montana) and particularly the closest neighbors. We believe the time for reviewing this proposal should be extended from its present date of 30 July 2010.
	5	• There are concerns about whether the State of Montana needs to invest a considerable sum of money acquiring more private land and whether or not private land should not be left as private land versus more ownership by the State of Montana.
	6	• All of us in the Avon area are supportive of and will continue to support good wildlife management policies. However, we have some significant concerns with the prospects of this property being potentially utilized for the introduction of bison into this area. The prospects of importing brucellosis to this area of Montana with the introduction of the bison cannot and should not be taken lightly by any of the ranchers in this area or by members of Fish, Wildlife & Parks.
	7	I think the above considerations affect all the residents of the Avon area. Additionally, there certainly are impacts directly on my property that would include the following:
	8	• Cross Canyon Ranch has a historic use of access across the property in question for purchase for management of our ranch. (There are a variety of recorded easements as well as historical uses that have taken place across this property)
	9	• Access from Avon through Trout Creek or Stagecoach Road (or what is being called Stagecoach Road) is in question and should be thoroughly reviewed. We believe that access will adversely affect us as neighbors and the stated purpose of this acquisition and protection of wildlife management will be affected as well.
	10	• Management of our ranch from unauthorized trespass is going to be difficult under this current proposal.
	11	• Lastly I have in-holdings within the proposed purchase area and I have had numerous conversations over the last five years and had understandings with the RCCC about swaps and other land acquisitions related to our in-holdings.
	12	While I was not able to attend the 14 July 2010 meeting in Deer Lodge, Montana, I believe a number of my neighbors were in attendance. I have had an opportunity to meet with Ray Vinkey this week and while I have many apprehensions and support the current concerns of my neighbors I would like to have further conversations with FWP to discuss this issue. I look forward to further conversation related to this matter and hope that with that further conversation a direction can be accomplished that will meet the needs and protect the rights of adjoining property owners and all ranch owners in Avon Montana while considering the wildlife applications at the same time.
58		I support the acquisition of the Spotted Dog Ranch and I believe the Draft Environmental Impact Statement adequately addresses all concerns.
59	1	I support the purchase of the Spotted Dog Ranch, which will be a wonderful asset for both wildlife and sportsmen, but under one condition: that the lands be managed as non motorized except for a couple of key access routes. I have seen too much public land shredded and abused by the tsunami of ATV's that are out there today. I have attached a couple of pictures taken on USFS lands to illustrate my point. Thank you for your interest in Montana's wildlife habitat.
00	2	See pages A-23 & A-24 for the 2 pictures enclosed with #59
60		Just a short note to let you know I think we need it for the future of wildlife in Montana.
61		I strongly support FWP's effort to purchase the Spotted Dog Ranch. This is a tremendous opportunity to provide outstanding public winter range for wildlife as well as excellent public hunting opportunities.

Com- menter #	Para- graph #	Comment
62		The goverment should not being buying land, that is wrong, If they cotinue to do so then they have the power to control the people and it turns into a communist state, therefor i am SRTONGLY OPPOSED to the FWP buying the dog creek ranch. FWP is having to change the rules to get the money to buy this and that is also wrong, if you dont have to obey the rules on this you will not obey them on other things. Rules are NOT just for us the public they are also for YOU, FWP. The money is for restoration not purchase of property and doingso is not using the money wher it was intended. In buying this property you will be taking a minimum of \$1000,000 out of the economy plus several jobs and in this economy that is drastic and WRONG! I believe this is being shoved down our throats and we have no choice which is also WRONG! Ibelieve your ultimate goal is to bring buffalo from Yellistone to this property which will at some point bring brucellosis, you need to deal with the buffalo issue down ther NOT HERE! The acess you believe you are going to use in Trout Creek IS NOT the old stage road, it went to Elliston instead, I can show you the route. Therefor I do not believe youwill be able to use that road! I understand the need for hunter to be able to hunt, but in doing this we will be overrun with hunters doing what ever they want, tresspassing, littering stealing, this will not solve any of the issues but create a boatload of them for us to deal with. I do not see ANY good coming from this purchase, just more problems for the rancher that fwp does not want to deal with.
63		I am strongly apposed to the sale of such a large piece of land to the government. I am also STRONGLY apposed to the method of acquisition, you should not be able to push something like this through or change the rules for ANY reason.
64	2	I am positively opposed to the State of Montana buying this land. FWP has shown no above board need for this land. If they follow through with their under the table bison plan it would be a travesty to the ranching community.
	<u>3</u>	Further, the use of NRDP funds is in-appropriate. At a time when our Governor and FWP need to play above board and work with the people of this state and within established policy standards this would be a big mistake.
65		I strongly support FWP's and Govenor Schweitzer's efforts to aquire Spotted Dog Creeks properties. Thank You!
66		See pages A-25 through A-28
67		I was born and raised in Anaconda and I'm still living in Anaconda. Since NRD money is supposed to be used for reclamation and since that reclamation is ongoing, that money should be there for it. It should not be used to buy a ranch! Reclamation could go on for years and that is what the money is for. One very angry Anaconda citizen! Leave the money alone!
68	1	I support the purchase of the Spotted Dog Ranch. The MFWP needs to do this for the benefit of all the people of the State of Montana. In fact there needs to be more of these land acquisitions. This Ranch is an important if not more important to the wildlife as the Sun River Game Range. It also sits within 100-150 miles of almost all the major centers in Montana giving access to all those people is tremendous. If the land was bought and subdivided would be a shame when money is available to purchase this ranch and have it Montana owned!
	2	A special thank you to all who are working on this to make it a reality and to Gov. Schweitzer for his involvement.
69	1	Rancher. Opponent.
	2	We oppose this acquisition for the following reasons:
	3	1. Time Frame – we own several miles of Clark Fork River at Bearmouth. We have consulted with the FWP and several other groups connected with restoring the river and we probably won't be considered for any bank stabilization projects or anything else for at least 20 years. That is when this section of river is scheduled for work. Ridiculous! If we can't do real restoration projects in a timely manner, why rush this Spotted Dog WMA thru? It should follow the proper channels like all other projects.
	4	2. Money – Once again, the river should be restored first and then buy land if there is any money left. Giving Rock Creek Cattle Company \$6 million to roll their option to buy is a huge waste of money. Wait and buy it from RY Timber directly and save that money. But that gets back to the time thing and working this out right and not rushing. Besides, all the information coming out about Foley sounds like he's a crook and FWP shouldn't deal with him anyway.
	5	3. State School Trust Lands – The approximate 10,000 acres of state land adds considerably to the long term maintenance expenditures of this project. Not only is the lessee (FWP) responsible for fence maintenance but also for weed control as well.
70	6	4. FWP – FWP is having money problems already and they simply cannot afford another WMA at this time.
70	1	Don't buy!
	2	If you do buy:
	3 4	No bisons! At anytime.
	5	No travel off county roads. No 4 wheelers or snowmobiles anywhere, except on county roads at any time.
	6	No special snowmobile trails.

Game retrieval off county roads only.

	n- Para- ter graph # Comment	
	<u>8</u> 9	County roads open July 1 til Nov 30th. Key locked for ranchers access at all times.
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/ 1	2	I suggested to Mike Thompson, FWP, at the Powell County Planning Board Meeting of 7-15-10 that we allow
	2	snomobiling, not only on USFS Road # 314, but also allow wintertime motorized use on all the lands lying east of this
		road that would be obtained as part of this acquisition.
	3	The logic of this suggestion is as follows:
	3	Snowmobiling has been an historical use of this road (which is part of the groomed trail system) and also the forest
		and state lands lying to the east of this road. And I think admittedly there has beeen traffic across private parcels of ground that are contained within and surrounded by the US Forest Service holdings. Those upper reaches of the subject property have always contained trails and open areas that the public has used, I believe largely because they were perceived as being open to the public to travel upon, whether by easement or otherwise.
	5	2) The USFS Road # 314 happens to lie more or less along the naturally occuring transition from grasslands/meadows, etc. to timberlands, and mixed timber and grasslands of steeper terrain with significant increases in elevation . Thus the road serves as a dividing line between ground that is physically different in character.
	6	3) Lands lying east of Rd. #314, due to its higher elevation, has always received significantly more snow in the winter, thus making it ideal for snowmobiling.
	7	4) By and large, the elk tend to winter west of Rd. #314 in the lower elevations.
	8	5) Having travelled this area extensively for over 35 years both summer and winter, I have observed that the elk do not use the higher elevations to any significant degree in the winter.
	9	6) I have also observed that the elk are not bothered much by snowmobilies passing through the area. The moose in the area do not seem to be disturbed at all. And I have not seen much disturbance of other wildlife that might be present in the upper elevations. I believe that recent studies of elk and induced stress by man, has shown that they are less bothered by snowmobiles than they are by someone on foot.
	10	7) I also believe that wildlife populations have increased over the years under the current pattern of use.
	11	8) As the USFS lands lying east of the Rd. # 314 have always been open to winter time cross country travel, it would seem that in order to maintain some continuity of use in that area, it would be sensible to extend the motorized winter time use to the newly acquired lands that will be in the WMA.
	12	9) From a law enforcement aspect, I would think it would be much easier to regulate snowmobile use and compliance issues by designating the entire east area as open to that type of use.
	13	10) Summertime motorized use should also be continued and allowed on the upper reaches (ridge trail) of this property also, as this has been a low impact to this area in the summer months.
	14	11) It will also be important that there is not an overly cumbersome process to accommodate hunting on the property.
	15	12) Most importantly, I think as this aquisition may move forward, we need to be very mindful of multiple use of this unique property. It is becoming increasingly important that the public has 'buy-in' to this major acquisition by FWP. From what I have read in the EA, and seen presented so far, this seems to be a sound puchase and seems to be in the public's best interest when compared to potential other outcomes for this incredible piece of Montana. I believe that multiple use can be accommodated without detriment to the wildlife habitat.
72		See pages A-29 through A-31
73	1	I would like to support the purchase of the spotted dog ranch for the use of a WMA. If the purchase does not go through we as people of the state of Montana will loose another battle against the developers and the land will be subdivided and road and homes will be built in the middle of some of the best elk country in the state.
	2	Rock Creek Cattle company is already in the process of developing the ground on the other side of the valley and all people that enjoy the outdoors are loosing access the the ground that they grew up on and used for many gernerations. I do not want to see this happen to the Spotted Dog Ranch.
74	1	I am very against the purchase of the Spotted Dog Ranch for the following reasons.
14	2	1. The Upper Clark Fork Basin Restoration Grant is settlement money for the Clark Fork River Operable Unit of the Milltown Reservior/ Clark Fork River Superfund Site. I feel the money would be better spent on the clean up of these areas. If these areas did not need cleaning up then there would not have been a settlement and no money for grants.
	3	2. RCCC is owned and affiliated with an out of state developer who has already borrowed 120 million dollars from Farm Credit Services to develope the other half of this property next to Deer Lodge. I feel that as a taxpayer that we have lent and lined this mans pocket enough.
	4	3. FWP's budget is not unlimited. There is a tremendous cost to maintaining such a property. Spraying for noxious weeds is very expensive and important. You have historically been limited by your budget in controlling weeds. This area has been historically highly contaminated by spotted knap weed. I do not feel that your employees will cover and controll the weeds in the same manner as someone with a financial interest in the land.

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- 4. Paying for the lease of DNRC lands from grant funds for 10 years is short sighted. After 10 years then what? It is one hand of the government paying the other hand of the government. And what about property taxes? I didn't think FWP paid taxes as they are a government agency. So then you are taking that money away from the schools and county.
- 6 5. I do not feel the wolves need any more public land to protect them.
- They eat enough livestock. I believe that you said when you released the wolves that they wouldn't eat livestock, and that the ranchers would be reimbursed for their losses. Forgive me if I do not believe any promises that you are making to the public in your proposal to buy the Spotted Dog.
- 8 Clean up the Clark Fork drainage as the money was originally intended, do a complete budget, show some income on the property and then we'll talk.
- I am opposed to the acquisition of the Spotted Dog Property as outlined in the Draft Environmental Assessment, June 2010. It is apparent not only in the abbreviated EA document, but at the public meeting held in Deer Lodge, that the purchase and the EA process are being fast-tracked to meet the bare-bone requirements of the law. Before any decisions for purchase are made and with a parcel this size, I ask that a minimum of one year be used to observe the property through the seasons to complete an accurate survey of all natural resource issues, and to work with all parties (adjacent landowners, agricultural interests, public agencies, local governments, recreationalists, hunters, and other interested individuals/groups) that will be impacted to develop a consensus-driven well thought-out management plan.
 - If the previous comment is not addressed, I ask that an additional alternative be considered that has potential to protect a good portion of the land from development, would allow public access, and provide beneficial elk habitat while continuing cattle grazing leases. This alternative would be to pursue conducting a land swap to block all of the DNRC lands into one parcel where public access would be possible. Rather than have RMEF pursue a conservation easement, I would recommend DNRC/FWP pursue an easement that would protect the remaining private block from development with the current owner/option holder. This may provide more bargaining power if a land swap is necessary for DNRC lands within Rock Creek lands west of Interstate 90. This alternative of balancing public and private ownership would hopefully continue to support the historical agricultural use of this property that has for the last 140 years balanced livestock production with maintaining valuable elk habitat.
 - Having served the Powell County Weed Board in the past, I am familiar with the noxious weed issues on portions of the proposed property and can say that that the cost estimates are too low and a survey needs to be completed to adequately develop a plan for management and cost. In addition to noxious weeds, cheatgrass infestations are present on this property and a plan not only for management of cheatgrass but also for fire mitigation needs to be completed and included in the cost of maintenance.
 - The Socio-Economic Assessment failed to analyze a majority of the potential economic impacts upon the low income area. While there is no guarantee that the purchase of the parcel by Rock Creek Cattle or another private party would continue livestock grazing, it is spelled out that the 2,000 cows currently grazed in the summer would immediately lose there grazing area for a number of years if purchased by FWP. Finding summer pasture for 2,000 cattle is next to impossible, so there would be a substantial reduction (up to 2,000 cows) by Rock Creek caused by the FWP purchase of this property. The loss of these cows would cause the State a loss of tax revenue and would negatively impact the businesses in Deer Lodge that provide feed, veterinary care, breeding, and transportation services for these cows. In addition, the cowboys have potential to loose there jobs, which in turn promotes a loss of families in the Deer Lodge area, and reduction in enrollment of the schools, not to mention less dollars coming from the state to the school. I ask that another assessment be completed that addresses all these potential negative impacts. To prevent negative economic impacts to the cattle industry in the future, I ask that a specific legally binding clause be agreed to by the State that the property will never be used for bison that have the potential to decimate the cattle industry in Montana by losing the brucellosis free status.
 - Finally, in these recessionary times when the state budget appears to be shrinking, it doesn't seem prudent for the state to be pursing property acquisition (though costs are limited in the first 5 years) that will require state funds in the future for personnel and maintenance costs. I am opposed to this proposal because of the top down style management plan where there has been limited planning, lack of consideration of other viable alternatives, and limited analysis of environmental and socio-economic consequences.
- I have read the published article (IR dated 7/25/2010) regarding a golden opportunity for the state of Montana to acquire a vast parcel of privately owned land located in the Spotted Dog drainage south of Avon, MT. I have reviewed the arguments, particularly from the CPA in Missoula, the Clark Fork Coalition science director, and from the gentleman in Anaconda. Let me remind you that public treasures such as our country's federal and state parks, memorials, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, Forest Service, BLM, and other areas of the public domain have always encountered stiff resistance whenever they were becoming established as, well, public lands.

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- It is acceptable for me that private interests express their opposition to the possibility of state acquisition of the Spotted Dog property. Afterall, I served in this great nation's armed forces during time of war in part to help uphold the principles of democracy and freedom of speech. Some naysayers expressed problems about maintenance costs to the state if successful in acquiring the property, particularly how it relates to weed control. I would remind them that the matter of weed control is out of our control if the property is lost to private interests. I would silence the concerns over rushing the deal since private interests with funding are all too willing to rush in. They are not holding off. There is the risk of loosing out on the land purchase without the expedited process for sending the project forward. I personally interviewed a manager of a private reserve inholding within one of our wilderness areas. He told me the Forest Service had an opportunity to acquire it back in the 80s, but lost it due to "official foot-dragging" and heart-breaking incompetence. Mistakes are good, but only when we learn from them.
- Let me also share the short story of former FS chief, Jack Ward Thomas, who told about his experience as a Texan later transferring to the state of Oregon. Jack told about growing up in Texas and how fishing, hunting, and other outdoor recreation pursuits was a risk-taking exercise getting onto private lands where he could experience such outdoor pleasures. Afterall, Texas is only about 2% public lands. When Jack moved to Oregon and discovered all that public land available to him for his (and others) enjoyment, here is what he said, "It was like I died and went to heaven."
- I have worked in the Spotted Dog country since 1988 inventorying and assessing aquatic resources for the Helena NF. Therefore, I am very familiar with the area. It would be tragic to see it lost ultimately to overdevelopment; my mission would be to save it. During his presidency, Theodore Roosevelt (R) implemented national refuges, monuments, and National Forests to restore wildlife and preserve wild places and other lands for the commons that is of immense value to the American people. These are things the majority of us want more and better of.
- In 1803, the federal government granted land to each new state for supporting public schools, but some states sold out those lands and spent the proceeds. Now they having nothing to show for it today. Other states, like Montana, wisely retained these lands and earn revenue from them, not to speak of the tremendous recreational value they hold. Teddy Roosevelt said, "We do not intend that our natural resources shall be exploited by the few against the interests of the many." Now is the time to assert that brand of leadership this country was blessed with in the past and go forth acquiring this extraordinary area called Spotted Dog. Our future Montanans deserve it, and is one major reason why visitors make Montana their destination choice.
- I grew up in Montana third in a line of generations beholden to this great state. The most difficult and disheartening trend that I have had to endure in all my lifetime has been watching helplessly aside as too many of Montana's vast treasures --its open spaces, wild places, and stream corridors--have been lost forever to development. There are many other reasons beside my values for preserving Montana's integrity and heritage. It's about our culture, our people, our way of life at stake. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

77 See page A-32

- 78 1 It's a good idea to purchase Spotted Dog.
 - 2 He likes that bison might be put on the land.
 - 3 He owns property south of Deer Lodge.
- The Spotted Dog Environmental Assessment (EA) seems to have something for everyone, but would it benefit wildlife? It also foreshadows some complex issues.
 - 2 As I read it, I wondered if it was a large-scale hunting plan disguised as an environmentalist's dream.
 - First, let's mention the positive aspects. It was a fascinating sketch of diverse habitat (including riparian areas)". . . with the largest concentration of wintering elk in the Upper Clark Fork" (p. 15 EA) It's "long-term conservation for some of the best big game habitat in Western Montana" (p. 3 EA)
 - 4 Activities could include hunting, wildlife viewing, fishing, hiking, bird watching and snowmobiling.
 - The project would decrease the threat of subdivisions while maintaining "landscape connectivity" to provide a home for "Montana Species of Concern" and "Federally listed Threatened/Endangered" species, like the Canada lynx.
 - 6 The cost per acre is a reasonable \$550.
 - 7 On the other side, where would the maintenance funds come from after the possible five years funding from the Natural Resource Damage Program and the 20 percent of the purchase price?
 - And what about the noise level? On p. 29 in the EA, it states, ". . .the potential for changes in noise levels is expected to be minimal since the rural character of the property would be unchanged."
 - 9 Wouldn't the noise level escalate with the sound of rifles, people talking and motors running? People would also bring their hunting dogs and kids into a pristine area. And 3,500 snowmobile users were listed on a 2011 trail grant application. (p. 25 EA) That's a lot of noise.
 - Also, would wolves be hunted on this property be if they should reappear? What kind of a wildlife sanctuary would it be if hunting and trapping are in the future? What would be trapped and why?
 - 11 Who has the water rights to the reservoir?

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	12	Would the Wildlife Management Area open the way to more development on the edges of the property like a hunting lodge?
	13	Would fire danger escalate from campers who smoke even if they don't have open fires?
	14	It's a sizable undertaking. On p. 26 of the EA, it says, "With the large size of this property, there would likely be
		challenges associated with managing recreation on this property. The challenges would include enforcement coverage,
		vandalism, maintenance and resource protection."
	15	There is a conflict between the comment in the EA, p. 27 and Attachment B. The EA, states, "The proposed acquisition of the Spotted Dog property is not expected to have any direct affects to the city of Deer Lodge."
	16	In Attachment B, it says, "The Spotted Dog WMA would provide positive economic benefits to local businesses in the surrounding communities. In addition to hunting, the purchase would provide opportunities for other recreational activities such as wildlife viewing, etc, all of which would contribute to the economic well-being of the local businesses."
	17	Could an elusive species like the lynx survive with all the recreational activity?
	18	I bring up these points because I think they should be thoroughly discussed before a final decision is made. In essence, the proposal appears to be a wonderful idea, but there are so many variables and unknowns, such as the long-term affects on the wildlife and the fire danger.
80	1	1. My main concern is access to my property which adjoins the spotted dog property with 1 1/2 miles of border. To access my property I cross 1 to 1 ½ miles of spotted dog property depending on corner of my land that I will be accessing. These routes have been used for over the last 40 years, since 1968. If I cannot continue to use these access routes by motor vehicle and by snowmobile in winter, I would be very much opposed to the purchase. Also would access be allowed to trail cattle across the spotted dog property to and from my property?
	2	2. You say that FWP will continue to pay the county the same amount in taxes that is presently being paid on the property, where is the money to pay the taxes coming from?
	3	3. I am concerned by the large amount of acreage already under state and federal ownership in Powell Co., seems like private ownership would be better overall for the county.
81	1	I have enclosed an article from the <i>Silver State Post</i> [newspaper, Deer Lodge, Montana; July 28, 2010; pg. 4; Letter to the editor by Patty Lovaas]. I agree with her viewpoint. I feel that this property should be purchased directly from RY Timber in November 2011. I attended the meeting held in Deer Lodge on July 14. It was stated that rock Creek Cattle Company would be collecting \$9 million dollars, not \$6 million as stated by Patty Lovaas. The Spotted Dog property is one mile from our ranch. I have ridden my horse through it many times. In that area, there aren't any developed roads and I don't foresee any "land rush" there.
	2	We rented summer pasture from [landowner] in section 22. We trail our cattle through the Spotted Dog. Will we be allowed to continue to do so?
	3	There is a predator problem in this whole area. No longer do I run a jack rabbit down while driving to town. No longer does a flock of grouse upset my horse. As I see it; the wolves are pressing the coyotes down to us and the small prey has been eaten. Now the coyotes are feasting on newborn Hereford calves. There has also been evidence of mountain lions and bears. I also feel that the wolves are partly responsible for pushing the elk down to our hay fields, especially in the fall. Now that the elk have tasted tender second crop or regrowth; they don't want to stay up on the dry hillside. I do want to thank you for the panels you gave us to fence the haystacks. They work great!
	4	There is a dead elk carcass on Jake Creek. Do you want me to send a picture of it so it could be sent to the wolf lovers?
	5	I do oppose the Jake Creek route to Spotted Dog. I'm uncertain if travelers would close the gate, and/or our horses might get tangled up in the cattle guard. The road is deplorable. It would be expensive to fix. It would be an imposition to [other landowners using this road].
82	1	My husband and I live on 1200 acre section in Powell County, our property borders state land for approximately 2 ½ miles. We have 300-700 elk on and off for 5 months on our land. We leave around 150 acres graze free for the elk. Our 10 ½ miles of fence gets hammered hard by the elk. We would like to voice our opinion.
	2	To have limited access for hunters.
	3	2. Walk in only
	4	3. We as adjacent landowners that support the elk for 5 months should get some priority for hunting (possibly a 3 day hunting season ahead of the crowd – which scatter the elk around)
	5	4. By letting hunters drive in it will lead to a slaughter of a lot of elk and a lot of wounded animals. It will also cause a great deal of landowner fence down.
	6	In 2009 my husband replaced 34 fence posts in less than a ½ mile on Beck Hill Rd. due to the elk moving back and forth across the road. There was also numerous places in the fence that needed mending. To say the least we let deer, antelope and elk graze our land. My jusband has been trying to draw a big horn sheep tag for 29 years with no success. He also has never drawn a goat, moose or elk tag. Do you think that is fair to him? We give out so much for the wildlife but we get nothing in return. The pictures enclosed are elk that winter on our land.

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Comment

7 See page A-33 through A-35 for the 5 pictures enclosed with #82

- I fully support the State of Montana purchasing the Spotted Dog Ranch in Avon, MT. I was born and raised in Elliston, MT and have hunted the hills around Avon all my life. My family and I hunt that area every year. It would benefit a lot of people to have access to areas that are now privately owned. We have a wonderful State and should be afforded the opportunity to be able to venture out into the hills and mountains without the worry of obtaining ownership permission, with more saying "no" than yes, or charging an exorbitant fee to hunt. I am all for farmers and ranchers owning property, and some are very considerate and understanding. Others, not so much. I do, however, understand some of their frustrations with hunters as well. I know the State has what they refer to as "block management" for property owners and hunters, which, in my opinion, works fairly well. However, as mentioned above, it would be nice to be able to access the hills and mountains of Montana for hunting without the worry of possibly trespassing on someone's property or venturing into a restricted area. Again, purchasing the Spotted Dog Ranch would benefit a lot of Montanans.
- I and my family have used this area for over 20 years for all types of outdoor activities including snowmobiling. First I have to say that I am a little upset at the short comment period on this EA and think this should be addressed! In the EA you state that you will manage the area for many uses "as well as public recreational opportunities". Etremely limited opportunities for only specific groups would probably be more appropriate! These groups will probably only be hikers and cross country skiers because it looks like to me, a lot of motorized access will be restricted as usual, except for the main roads which will be probably be even more limited in the years to come. We are slowly being squeezed out of areas on so called "public land" that we have been using for generations.
 - You state that this area has a large wildlife population. So obviously the current restrictions that allow access and motorized (snowmobile) use are working....enhance it but why change it completlely???? Manage the land but don't put even more restrictions on the people that enjoy and use it most. I believe the land should be purchased and managed but don't use public money to purchase land and then restrict our use so much that only an elite thinking few can use it. I personally have bad hips and am now unable to hike for long distances and every year it seems like I am unable to access more and more areas due to my reliance on motorized vehicles. Restrict access on only the most vital of areas but don't treat the entire area as one vital spot for wildlife so everyone must get out. Land and wildlife can be managed without widespread restrictions on the publics use. At a minimum the eastern side of the main road should be left open as much as possible for general use and snowmobiling during the winter. This is a great purchase for FWP and should not be passed up. All I would ask is that the land be used wisely and in consideration of ALL concerned.
- The following comment on the possible Spotted Dog Land Purchase represents my personal thoughts as a private individual and should not be construed as a comment from [the name of employer]. As a private individual I strongly support the acquisition of lands in the Spotted Dog drainage as it is a tremendous opportunity to increase public access as well as improve habitat conditions for a variety of fish and wildlife species. There will also be opportunities with other agencies and private groups for joint partnerships that could help reduce some of the state costs in managing the land in the future. From my perspective it is well worth the expenditure of some of the principal in the trust funds, if necessary, to obtain the lands.